

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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### **CONYERS HOSTS FIRST CONGRESSIONAL RAMADAN IFTAR**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement at the first Congressionally hosted Ramadan Iftar last night:

“Welcome, everyone, to our first ever Ramadan Iftar, where we join our Muslim brothers and sisters in breaking the fast. I am also pleased to announce that we plan to hold this important event every year, and look forward to doing so with CAIR (Council on American and Islamic Relations).

\_\_\_\_\_Events like this evenings are important because they help us learn more about the American Muslim community and the significance of Ramadan to the Muslim people by engaging in this traditional religious custom during the Holy Month. By partaking in this religious tradition, we hope to promote the toleration, understanding, and acceptance of all religions and religious cultures and to celebrate religious diversity, one of the many great principles that our country was founded upon.

I was saddened to learn today that President Bush’s commission on public diplomacy recently noted that in nine Muslim and Arab nations only 12 percent of the people surveyed believed that “Americans respect Arab/Islamic values.” This is an unfortunate finding and we are here tonight to promote change. We are here tonight to show the world that we believe that the way to bring about a change in the way the Muslim, Arab, and all other nations view Americans is to show the world that we absolutely do not tolerate religious intolerance and ignorance in any form.

I find it necessary to remind many of my Christian and Jewish friends that the Islamic religion is one of the three great Abrahamic faiths; that it is a religion that promotes peace and unity. In fact, a recent study has shown that the Islamic faith is the fastest growing religion in the United States today.

The truth is that Christianity and Islam share so much in common. The story of the earth’s creation in the Book of Genesis is much like the story of creation in the Qur’an. The Qur’an contains similar verses as the Ten Commandments. There is the shared belief in one god, who is omnipotent and omniscient and in the existence of the human soul.

There is no question that Arabs and Muslims are facing an unprecedented level of discrimination in America. It is our common purpose to fight this discrimination wherever it rears its ugly head.”

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